***Mission Statement:*** ***The Montgomery County Committee Against Hate/Violence works to eradicate acts of hate and intimidation through community education, advocacy, collaboration, and legislation.***

**Meeting Date and Time**: **WEDNESDAY, October 9; 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

Virtual-only meeting

**Zoom Meeting:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87211775007?pwd=oYJLb2ZIXgEqiA4yISQyiacZ9qXdY9.1](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87211775007?pwd%3DoYJLb2ZIXgEqiA4yISQyiacZ9qXdY9.1&sa=D&source=calendar&usd=2&usg=AOvVaw2-KnJtgVJUQUnduojtVvn0)  
Meeting ID: 872 1177 5007  
Passcode: 98765  
One tap mobile: 1-301-715-8592

List of attendees:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Voting Members | Non-voting members & County residents |
| Present | Pablo Blank, Chair  Gabrielle Zwi, Vice-Chair  Sanjeet Sam Dey, Secretary  Sheik Hassan  Femi Richards  Susan Stolov  Lisa Taylor | Anis Ahmed, Office of Human Rights  James Stowe, Director OHR  Loretta Garcia, Office of Human Rights  Rachel Breslin, Human Rights Commission  Lt. Jeff Innocenti, MCPD  Kimberly Jones, Montgomery College  Janita Love, MCPS |
| Absent | Leah Michaels  Vanessa Morris  Tony Jia  Stephany Troyer  Richard Allen  Maria Herrera  Craig Simon | Selena Singleton, County Council  Wesley Darden, Office of County Council member Mink  Capt. Jordan Satisnky, MCPD  Kate Chance, Office of Community Partnerships |

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:07pm.
2. Due to having seven members in attendance and seven members absent, we could not reach a quorum to adopt a meeting agenda, approve the September’s minutes and make any decisions. The Committee discussed a series of topics without making any decisions.
3. MCPD presented the September Bias report and Committee members discussed it.
   1. There were 14 non-school incidents and 22 in-school incidents.
   2. An individual who was caught on camera causing damage to a religious institution received several charges for the caused damage.
   3. MCPD deployed its Special Event Response team on October 7, to prevent any hate incident.
   4. MCPD did not get any request to change the MOU with MCPS on reporting bias/hate incidents at schools. The MOU still request for MCPS to report “all incidents” and “any crime” at school facilities.
4. Members reflected on the 2024 Friendship Picnic, listing opportunities for improvement and good practices/outcomes:
   1. Positive outcomes/practices
      1. Record attendance. We fed 2,300 County residents, and we estimate we had over 2,500 people in attendance.
      2. Outreach was successful, at least in quantity of people.
      3. The Friendship Game was a success. Many people participated, including children who were motivated to find and talk to other residents.
      4. All vendors were present and were able to successfully served their food.
      5. We had a good information system about the different food options.
      6. Excellent team work and problem solving. Team members felt ownership to address attendee’s needs as they arose.
      7. The presence of the County Executive and five County Council members, as well as representatives of the two MD Senators who issued citations celebrating the 10th Anniversary.
      8. The recognition of former Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committee who were instrumental to organize the first 9 picnics.
      9. Great performers.
      10. Great pictures that portrayed how people had fun and enjoyed the Picnic.
      11. Recording interviews and Picnic’s activities to produce ads and presentation videos.
   2. Opportunities for improvement.
      1. Some attendees complained we did not have Asian food options.
      2. The wrist band system did not work well. We need to get back to the ticket system, or something different.
      3. We do know how many Muslims participated, but we should avoid scheduling the Picnic on a day that is observed as a holiday by any of our community members.
      4. Ice cream delivery was not good. We distributed tickets for adults when it was only for kids (as we did have a cap of 1,000 ice creams) and attendees were asking for “shaved ice” rather a ice cream bar. Also, we did not deliver the ice cream at the same time, making families doing the line twice.
      5. At some point the line to register was so long that we stop registering people to deliver tickets faster. We may need to have more volunteers to have shorter lines.
      6. Some attendees were confused about where each event was happening. We may need to have a map plan for the Picnic.
      7. Explaining to people the food options took a long time, making the line even longer. We need to have pictures with the options, so people make the decision before reaching the registration table.
      8. Attendees asked for gluten free food and ice cream. We did not have those options.
      9. We did not have food allergies alerts in each vendor’s booth.
      10. Some vendors wanted to start serving earlier, and that created a coordination problem. Also, some vendors ran out of food very fast, such as the “American” food (hamburger and hotdogs)
      11. For safety purposes, we should not provide tickets to minors who are not with a responsible adult.
      12. Some food vendors needed our team’s support to deliver food appropriately and on time.
      13. Food volunteers should have a written guidance on how to allocate food tickets, manage the line, etc.
      14. VIP speakers should have a written guidance on what the expectation is, to avoid, for example, speaking about elections.
      15. Coordination issue about the stage. We did not have the stage ensemble on time, delaying the fool artistic program.
      16. MCPD could not coordinate with Parks Police before the event. There was some parking and car flow management.
      17. Paying for food costed $22,000. We may not be able to afford this from the County budget. We may need to fundraise.
      18. We need to recruit more volunteers to effectively run activities such as the Demographic Survey and the Friendship Game.
5. MCPS representative presented the new triage system MCPS is using to screen bias/hate incidents and decide next steps.

Until a month ago, MCPS reported all bias/hate incidents to MCPD. Now, they decided to create a system with three color levels, Yellow, Orange, and Red. School Principals will decide the category of each incident, in consultation with other MCPS staff. To decide the “bias level,” school principals will primarily consider the intention to cause harm on the victim.

When principals classify the event as “Red,” the event will be reported to MCPD.

When principals classify the event as “Orange,” the event may or may not be reported to MCPD.

When principals classify the event as “Yellow,” the event will no be reported to MCPD.

Committee members reflected on the new system as followed,

* Did MCPS consult with local nonprofits such as NAACP, Identity, the Black & Brown Coalition within MCPS, etc.? We know for sure that this Committee was not consulted. A change of this magnitude should have been done with maximum consensus.
* From a legal perspective, the change seems to be raising the standard for “intent to harm.” What legal interpretations were taking into concideration for this change?
* Now the full system relies on the Principal’s ability to understand incidents without their own biases playing a role. Indeed, principals will make a judgment of the intention to classify the incident. How and when Principals were trained for this change?
* What was parent’s feedback on this change. It looks like parents have received a series of emails about this change.
* It looks like the new system is based on analyzing the “intention” of the perpetrator rather than the “impact” on the victim. That does not seem to be a good system to eradicate bias/hate from MCPS.
* How MCPS collects the data not reported to MCPD? How incidents can be tracked over the time? What if a student commits two or more Yellow cases? Does the system include clarifications for repeating perpetrators?
* In the previous system, we have been seeing for months a legend on MCPD Bias reports “case being handle at the school.” That seems to be what is now a “yellow case” but it was still reported to the Police. Why changing the reporting method without changing the action to mitigate/remediate the incident? Is there an intent to hide bias/hate incidents?
* Indeed, Principals have a “natural nudge” to avoid reporting incidents to minimize their caseload. Indeed, two Committee members suffered bias incidents in two MCPS schools, and the Principals never reported them to MCPD, and probably not even internally. With the new system, it looks like the nudge to hide incidents will be even bigger.
* It looks like there is an Ethos on MCPS to work isolated from the rest of the society, including parents, public agencies, nonprofit stakeholders, etc. Following this operational model, the community may not find easy to trust MCPS on their decision making, funding requests, etc.

Next actions.

* Request a formal meeting to the MCPS Superintendent.
* Participate in a Board of Education Public hiring to raise awareness of this situation.
* Send a letter to MCPS Superintendent expressing our concerns wit the new system.

7. Montgomery County Public Hearing for the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Members of the Committee who attended the Public Hearing made a brief presentation of the Commission goals and what was discussed during the Hearing. The link to the Hearing is. <https://www.youtube.com/live/vo6zLjl0m2s> . Committee members recommended watching the testimony found on this period: 1:31:50 - 1:45:50.

1. Committee members analyzed the Montgomery County Committee Evaluation and Review Board (CERB) request and questionnaire. A small working team made by Sam, Femi, Gabrielle, and Pablo will draft the first response version by Wednesday, October 23. That version will be shared with all Committee members so they can provide feedback by Monday, October 28. The Committee Chair and Vice Chair will prepare the final version to be submitted to the OHR by Tuesday, October 29. The OHR will submit the final response on October 30.
2. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.